

[1 March, 2007]

RAJYA SABHA

(c) No.

(d) Does not arise.

Violence by ULFA in Assam

317. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he, during his recent visit to Myanmar, discussed the issue of stepped up violence by ULFA and its threat to the Hindi speaking and other outsiders to leave the State and urged to explore ways to destroy and uproot ULFA camps and its members who are using its territory to create disturbance in Assam;

(b) whether India and Myanmar agreed to expedite work on fencing their common border and to supply military hardware to institutionalise cooperation between their armies for operations against ULFA and other insurgent groups in the North-East; and

(c) to what extent this decision helped in reducing the threat?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The External Affairs Minister paid an official visit to Myanmar from 19-21 January, 2007. During his meetings with the Myanmar leadership, the full range of bilateral relations was discussed including the activities of Indian Insurgent Groups on the Indo-Myanmar border. Myanmar reiterated its commitment not to allow its territory to be used for activities inimical to India. Discussions with the Myanmar leadership also dwelt on defence cooperation and border management.

Safety of Indians in Iraq

318. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that after the execution of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad, there has been a spurt in incidents of blasts in Iraq;

(b) if so, whether there has been any casualty of Indians living there; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to ensure safety of Indians working and living in Iraq?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) Yes.

(b) No case of casualty has been brought to the attention of the Government.

(c) The Government of India is concerned about the safety of Indians working in Iraq. Emigration controls have been tightened to discourage Indians from travelling into Iraq. There is an Official advisory from the Government advising against travel of Indian nationals to Iraq. However, these measures are temporary in nature and are subject to review from time to time.

Refugee camps on Indo-Nepal border

†319. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to raise the matter of lakhs of refugees living in refugee camps at Indo-Nepal border with Governments of Nepal and Bhutan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the rationale put forth by Government therefor; and

(d) whether it is a fact that Indian intelligence agencies have also expressed the apprehension that the anger of lakhs of people living in the said camps could take a dangerous turn?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) The issue of refugees living in camps in Nepal is a bilateral matter between Nepal and Bhutan. Government of India is aware that Nepal and Bhutan have been discussing ways and means to resolve the problem. Government have urged both Nepal and Bhutan, with whom we enjoy close and friendly relations, to work towards an early resolution of this humanitarian problem. Government is committed to taking

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.